

Remarks

A Petition for an Extension of Time for responding within the third month, together with the required fee under 1.17(a)(3) accompanies this paper.

Priority Matter

The Examiner makes reference to a claim of priority to two earlier applications. No claim of priority is made in this application.

Specification and Claim Objections

The Examiner takes notice that the specification and claims contain line numbers and that the line numbers of the claims do not correspond to the preferred format. However, this application was filed without any line numbering. Instead, the paragraphs of the specification are numbered in the preferred format. No change is believed necessary.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §112

The first set of claims 1-9 stand rejected under the second paragraph of Section 112 as being indefinite because the limitation "the unique identifier" lacks a sufficient antecedent basis. Claim 1 has been amended to replace the offending limitation with a new limitation "the unique machine name and password combination" as previously introduced in claim 1. This amendment is believed to correct the problem.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §103(a)

All of the claims 1-31 stand rejected under Section 103(a) as being obvious over US Patent 6,430,711 to Sekizawa in view of US Application Publication 2003/0072027 of Haines et al. The Haines et al. reference published well after the filing date of the subject application but is based on US Application 09/976,625, filed on October 11, 2001, which is slightly more than two months before the filing date of the subject application and arises presumptively as prior art under Section 102(e) on that date.

However, prior to October 11, 2001, the effective date of the Haines et al. reference, applicants made the claimed invention in this country. The invention was completed prior to October 11, 2001 by an actual reduction to practice including both software and hardware components of the invention.

Accompanying this response is a Declaration under 37 CFR 1.131 made by all of the named inventors demonstrating that the invention was completed before October 11, 2001, the effective date of the Haines reference. Not all of the inventors were immediately available to execute the declaration because they are no longer employed by the assignee of record, Questra Corporation. Exhibits accompanying the Declaration evidence that the invention actually existed and worked for its intended purpose.

Accordingly, the Haines et al. reference is not prior art within the meaning of Section 102(e) because Haines et al. did not file their application in the United States before the invention by the applicants. For this reason, the rejection for obviousness should be withdrawn.

Minor Amendments

Minor amendments have been made to claims 20 and 21 to correct obvious punctuation errors. A period has been appended to the end of claim 20. A semicolon has been appended to claim 21's penultimate paragraph, and a semicolon has been replaced by a period at the end of claim 21.

* * *

In view of the above remarks and accompanying evidence, all of the claims 1-31 are believed in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of these claims is respectfully requested. For any questions regarding the application or this response, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' representative by telephone at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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